

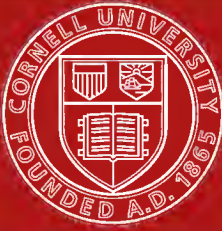
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Dr. H O O P E R's
S E R M O N
Preach'd before the
HOUSE of COMMONS,
April the 4th 1701.

Lune 7^o die Aprilis, 1701.

Ordered,

THat the Thanks of this House be given to Dr. *Hooper* (Dean of *Canterbury*, and Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation) for the Sermon by him Preached before this House upon *Friday* last, at *St. Margaret's Westminster*, and that he be Desired to Print the same; And that Sir *Edward Seymour* and Mr. *Dolben* do Acquaint him therewith.

Paul Jodrell,
Cl' Dom' Com'.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable the
House of Commons,

A T
St. Margaret's Westminster,

O N
Friday the 4th of April, 1701.

B E I N G
The Day of Publick FAST and Humiliation.

B Y
GEORGE HOOPER, D. D. Dean of *Canterbury*,
and Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation.

L O N D O N,
Printed by *J. Leake*, for *Walter Kettilby* at the
Bishop's Head in *St. Paul's Church yard*, 1701.

PHIL. iii. 20.

*For our Conversation is in Heaven :
from whence also we look for the
Saviour,-----*

THE Original Word for that of *Conversa-
tion* in the Text is known to signifie, not
only our Moral Behaviour, or Conduct of
Life, in which sence it is apparently ta-
ken in the first Chapter of this Epistle ; *Let your
Conversation be as becomes the Gospel of Christ* ; but
also a State and Condition of Life, with certain
Privileges and Obligations, as we are Incorporated
into some City or Nation, a Citizenship, a Political
Relation, wherein we stand. And this last sence has
always been judg'd by the best Interpreters, princi-
pally to belong to this place. Our Citizenship,
that is the great Subject of our Conversation, the
Social Relation and Political Concern whereby it is
Govern'd, is *in Heaven*, the City or Country above ;
this meaning not excluding, but rather inferring and
implying that other usual one, of a suitable De-
meanour, and correspondent *Conversation*, in the
the common signification of the English word.

And thus the Apostle may be understood by these
words, as telling us in General, and suitably to the
Scope of the Chapter, that our *Citizenship is in
Heaven :*

Heaven: That where-ever we are dispers'd, and at present Reside, we still belong to another Place, and have the Honour and Happiness to be entituled to the Rights and Privileges of a better Country: That we Christians are now the immediate Subjects of the Heavenly King, and that hereafter we shall be translated to the Capital Seat of his Empire, rescued from all our present Distresses; and possess'd of that Glorious Happy Estate to which we are bid to aspire: That he therefore *accounted all things here but as Loss and Dung, if by any means he might attain the Resurrection of the Dead; pressing on towards that Mark, and looking for the Lord, who should change our now vile Body, and remove it from this vile Abode, that it may be like unto his Glorious Body, and fitted for the Glories of its Eternal Residence.*

This Sense the Place bears well, if we understand this Citizenship to be parallell'd only with such a one as that of *Rome* was, and by the Pleading of which *St. Paul* was rescued from the Scourging, he otherwise had suffer'd at *Jerusalem*. The Freedom of it was highly valued, and the Chief Captain had *obtain'd* it *with a great Summ*. It was some Safeguard in Foreign Empires, but a sure Protection in the *Roman World*; as the *Magistrates* and *Sergeants* of this City *Philippi* were put we know in a great fright, for having violated that Privilege in the person of our Apostle. And to that Claim of his, so Universally allow'd, and there so Remarkably made, now in an Epistle to those *Philippians*, he may be well thought to allude.

But it may be added, that the Apostle probably refers not here to that City, tho' Mistress of so large part of the then known World, however Honourable
and

and Advantageous the Freedom of it might be, but to the Commonwealth of *Israel*, and to the Great City of *Jerusalem*. For however Great *Rome* might be in the esteem of the rest of the World, this Citizenship was much more priz'd by the *Jews*, and their Profelytes. *Jerusalem* was the *City of the Great King*, the Lord of Heaven and Earth : All that were Free of that, were Subject to the Lord of Lords, and under his peculiar Protection. The Authority of that King was justly founded, and of Natural Right, truly August and Unaccountable : his Empire really extended to the whole World ; and his Power, when he pleas'd to exert it, was absolutely irresistible, as it would in some short time actually prevail. Accordingly the *Jews* now look'd out for a *Saviour* ; their Prince, the *Messiah* they expected in a little while should appear, restore the Kingdom to *Israel*, and subdue all those Nations under them, whether *Romans* or *Parthians*, who had Lorded over them, but were now to be their Tributaries and Slaves. He was to come from the Holy City ; to gather up from all quarters of the Earth the Dispens'd Holy People, both those that remain'd alive, and those that were dead ; and to return with them Triumphantly back into *Judea*, to Reign together, with great Glory and Felicity in the promis'd Land of *Israel*.

This the *Jews*, the Citizens of the Earthly *Jerusalem*, expected to be accomplish'd in a little time ; and for this they waited impatiently, ready to rise up, and go meet their *Messiah*, upon the least Rumour of his Appearance. But the *Messiah* was already come, and they the *Jews* had, with their own hands

Gal. 4. 26.

hands destroyed those their Carnal Hopes. However he had, even by that his own Death, wrought already a more Glorious Deliverance, than they had imagin'd. The *Man Christ Jesus* was now ascended up to the *Jerusalem which is above, the Mother, the Metropolis of us all*: hereafter to appear in Greater Pomp, with a more Mighty Power; to rescue them from their more deadly Enemies, Sin and Death; as he would enstate them in a yet unconceiveable Happiness, and which should continue long, even beyond their Thousand Year, for Ever and Ever.

In this view therefore, and with reference to this *Hope of Israel*, I suppose St. Paul to have spoke the Sentence of the Text. He had been before oblig'd, by the boasting pretences of some of his Nation, to express, in the beginning of this Chapter, the little value he set upon his *Jewish* Linage and Circumcision, Learning or Privileges, in respect of the *Knowledge of Christ*, or the *Messiah, Jesus his Lord*; and in regard of the *Resurrection of the Dead*, which he so ardently hop'd by that *Knowledge to attain*. Those *Earthly Things* he minded not; and therefore concludes, remembering himself and the *Philippians* of their Higher Country, and Excelling Expectations. *Our Citizenship, says he, is in Heaven, not in a part of Palestine*; and from that City of ours above, we also, no less than the *Jews, look for the Saviour, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile Bodies, &c. according to the working, whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself*: Not the Powers of this World, but Spiritual and more Mighty: Not by putting to Death, but destroying Death; when shall be brought to pass the Saying that is written,

written, Death is swallowed up in Victory: O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?

This seems to be the Natural Intention of St. Paul in these words, and to make up their full Sense. And *First* therefore we shall a little consider this *Citizenship* of Ours; where it is, what its Privileges, and what its Duties: Thus far understanding the word *Conversation*, as it means our Political Relation. And then, *Secondly*, we may reflect upon the *Behaviour* to which we are obliged by this new Relation; what manner of Men we ought to be, and what our Life and *Conversation*, the sense in which the word is ordinarily taken. All which you will *then* please to give me leave to apply to the Present Occasion.

I. And, *First*, That there was such a Heavenly Country, to which the Faithful of this did appertain, is what the *Writer to the Hebrews* tells us the Saints of old did well understand: *They all died in Faith, not having received the Promises, but having seen them* Hebr. 11. 13. *afar off; and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth.* For, continues the Apostle, *they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a Country; but now they desire a Better, that is, a Heavenly.* And truly, if they had been mindful of that from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have return'd. For, as the Apostle had before said, *Abraham the Father of the Faithful* Hebr. 11. 8, 9. *sojourn'd in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Country; dwelling in Tabernacles with the Children of the Promise; looking for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.*

This Heavenly City, which those of old Saw at that distance obscurely, and into which they could not then Enter, but, by some very particular and extraordinary Favour, is now discover'd and laid open by our *Messias*, its Great Lord. He has, by the Gospel, given our Faith a clear Prospect ; and by a *Great Summ*, an Inestimable Price, purchased for all that Lift themselves under his Banner, the Freedom, and Citizenship of it. We claim its Privileges now, and shall have Entrance into it hereafter, by virtue of our Birthright, as we are become Sons of God, and Coheirs of the Promises with our Redeemer.

Such a City there is above, to which we belong ; as certainly as there was a *Rome* to the *Romans*, or the *Jews* a *Jerusalem* : not indeed yet seen by us ; no more than either of those Places might have been by thousands of their Citizens ; but which is now certainly subsisting, and to which we are continually tending : A City, not as *Theirs*, expos'd to the Force of its Enemies ; and which may be destroy'd, to the disappointment of our Arrival there ; *not made by hands*, nor to be ruin'd by them ; but which will assuredly stand fast, and await our coming.

By *Baptism*, as by a certain Out-gate of this City, we are now admitted into the Precincts and Jurisdiction of it. And a high Privilege it is to Christians, that what part of the Earth soever they now inhabit, and under whatever Temporal Government they are plac'd, they are yet the Beloved Subjects of a Superior Power, and under the Resort and Protection of the King of Kings. Others indeed might exercise Authority over them in His name,
who

who yet belong'd not to the same City : but what they did, could never deprive the Christian of the Favour of the Great Emperor, nor hinder him from his Great Inheritance. We want not the License nor Mediation of those Powers to make our Distresses known to our proper Sovereign, or to beg His Graces : We have the liberty all to resort directly unto Him, and to make our Personal Addresses to his Divine Majesty.

It was a great Wish our Apostle made for *Agrippa* ; Acts 26. That He, tho' a King, should be such a one as *St. Paul* was. And had He been *persuaded to be a Christian*, and admitted into that Fellowship ; He had been advanced to a far higher Degree, and more advantageous Privilege, than the Imperial Favour could conferr. But had He been *altogether such a one*, and not *excepting the Bonds* ; had he stood a Prisoner for the same Cause ; he had been then certainly in a much more Honourable and better-Distinguished Station, than he was in all that Pomp that attended him : He had then, instead of being an Humble Friend of *Cæsar's*, and an Associate of *Festus* his Slave, been an Embassador and Representative of the Almighty ; and his Voice speaking on such an occasion, had been indeed, what was blasphemously said of his Father, *the Voice of a God*, and Acts 12. 22. *not the Voice of a Man*.

So great is the Satisfaction the Christian may justly take to himself from the Honour of this his Relation : but a greater arises yet from his assured Expectation. Whatever Inconveniences he may at present suffer, in this his strange Country ; within a little while he shall Arrive at his Native one : In the

mean time from all intervening Hardships and unjust Usage, he *Appeals* unto his Saviour, and unto his Saviour he *must* go. In *this World* Satan may bear Rule, for he is the *Prince* of it ; God values not himself upon this his Earthly Kingdom, it is disturb'd often and shar'd by Rebels to his Authority : But when his own *Kingdom comes*, then shall ours begin ; and we attain infinitely greater Joy and Happiness, than ever yet Earthly Crown was supposed to bring. We shall not Die, we are those who are to Rise again to the New Earth. Let the Wicked be laid in perpetual Sleep, their only Hope ; we shall awake again : not as the *Jews*, to a Millenary Tenancy of the Land of *Canaan*, and the enjoyment of *Milk and Honey* ; but to an *Inheritance reserv'd in Heaven*, and to a Society of that Bliss, in which God is Happy, and which endures to the same Eternity.

Such are the Advantages of these Citizens, but they have too their Duty. For this City has its peculiar Ordinances and Laws, and obliges all those who are Enroll'd of its number to the observance of them ; all of them expressly engaging themselves in a solemn Contract, and Adjur'd to it by the Blood of our Saviour. Laws to be observ'd, under the sanction of a terrible Penalty, as well as of an exceeding great Reward ; the prevaricating Citizens, not only to be disenfranchiz'd and treated as Strangers, but as the falsest Rebels, and most execrable Traytors, Corresponding with the Enemies of their blessed Master, and loving and serving them, more than the *Lord who bought them*.

By the Ordinance also of our Heavenly King, even the Governments of this Earth subsist ; and all these
Statutes

Statutes of theirs, are suppos'd to be Authoriz'd by his Royal Assent and Pleasure ; the several National Corporations, if I may so speak, of Mankind existing by Grants and Charters from him ; and with Allowance to make such By-Laws as shall not be inconsistent with his Eternal Sanctions. Indeed all these lesser Governments, are but as so many Eastern Companies, travelling cross their Desarts ; and bound homewards, under their Temporary Leaders, and Provisional Ambulatory Laws ; but subject all the while to the Catholick Laws of the Country to which they are returning, and all of them finally responsible for the whole Conduct to their Common Natural Sovereign : Heathen, or Christian of all Sects, bound to stand by what knowledge of their Duty they have receiv'd, and to answer for what they have neglected ; each of them, whatever they have been pleas'd to speak or act in the progress of their Journey, concerning the Will and Person of their Lord, going towards his Prefence to give an account, and attending his Righteous pleasure.

But further, In the midst of these Temporary Kingdoms, which are by the Sufferance and under the Controll of our Lord, he has too begun his Heavenly City here ; and on Earth erected a Society of his own, with particular Regulation, and under distinct Officers: a Government not to be taken up at our pleasure, nor Modell'd by the Fancies of Men ; no more to be Form'd, in subserviency to the Interests of this World, than it was first Design'd for them. Other Governments may have been left to be regulated, according to the Circumstances and Disposition of the People: but this Political Body,
has

has Christ our Lord for its Founder and Legislator ; and no Appointments are to be follow'd differing from those, which he by his Apostles has Instituted, and they by their Writings and Practice have transmitted. To continue these Primitive Orders, is the Duty of the Officers of the Heavenly City ; and to observe them, is the Duty of all its Citizens.

II. So our *Conversation*, that is our Commonwealth to which we belong, *is in Heaven* ; and agreeable to that our Citizenship should our *Conversation*, that is, our Behaviour be.

And in some degree our Conversation and Demeanour should be, as if we were in Heaven ; according to the measure of our Abilities, as Careful and Circumspect, as Holy, Reverential and Obedient : in as much as we, who are in the Church on Earth, are in an outer Court of Heaven ; within its Verge, and under the immediate and particular inspection of its Great Lord.

So should the Earth now become a part of Heaven, and grow Holy Ground ; having nothing in it, as far as lies in us Christians, that is opposite and contrariant to it. For the *Earthly Things* in the Context disallow'd by the Apostle, are not so censured, because they are of this Place, and transacted here ; but because they are done in forgetfulness, neglect, or defiance of that other Place to which we more peculiarly relate : the Earth not being guilty, as distinct in situation from Heaven ; but as far as it shall be found to be in contradiction to it, and to *lie in Evil*.

But

But our Conversation is not the more in Heaven, the more it is abstracted and remov'd from the Societies on Earth : No more than a Pilgrimage from our own Land, can carry us ever the nearer to the Heavenly City : Tho' some have understood such retirements into Privacies or Desarts, to be the safest and shortest way thither. In order to have our *Conversation in Heaven*, it is not generally requisite to flie the Conversation of Men ; it is frequently not only Inexpedient, but Unlawful : and a Good and Useful Man, may often be no more allow'd to subtract his Company from the World upon that pretence ; than he is to dismiss his Soul from his Body, that It may be the sooner in the better Place.

Our Conversation is to be yet on Earth, the Station God has assign'd us ; and Here it is to be in Heaven ; we living in this mixt World, as those who know that hereafter they shall be of a separate unpolluted Society. Here therefore we are to Endeavour, what we are bid to Pray ; that the *Will* of God may be *done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*. We not indeed imploy'd in the same Offices, nor doing it altogether in the same manner ; but betaking our selves to our part here, as cheerfully and as obediently as the Angels themselves discharge their Duty : We being even now Servants and Subjects as well as they ; but of the meaner Station, and remoter Attendance. The Angels, as Priests, wait in the Temple upon God's immediate Service : And we, as many of the other *Jews*, not yet so much as arrived to our own Country, are yet looking and tending thither ; paying our Duties at a distance, and as we now may ; going *from strength to strength,*

Psal. 84. 7. *strength, untill at last we appear before our God in Sion.*

Now here on Earth, we are known to have a different Duty of Conversation, in the *Threefold Relation* we bear, to *God*, to *our Neighbours*, and to *our selves*. And even in these regards belonging to this World, we are to be influenced by that our Relation to our City above.

For, *First*, Our Demeanour to our Neighbours, as they are to live only on the Earth, be they fellow-Citizens of Heaven or no ; is to be regulated by the Laws of Heaven, and is likewise enforced and cultivated by them.

And, *First*, as it has been premis'd, That whenever the Municipal Law of the Earth interferes with the Law of Heaven, or the Manners and Fashions below with the Directions from above ; we are then to remember our selves of the Government to which we belong : so, on the other hand, the Welfare and Peace of this World, is best promoted and secured by our Respect to the other ; and Justice and Duty will be paid to Men with the greatest Exactness in this Worldly Commonwealth, by those that are of the Heavenly.

For, to begin with Inferiours ; The Christian Slaves were better Servants even to the Heathens, as knowing they *served the Lord* in them : better Children, as honouring in their Earthly Parents their *Father in Heaven* : better Subjects, as owning their Kings for the *Ministers* of their God. And on the other side, the Lord knew himself to have a *Master in Heaven* ; the Father, that he was a Child of God ; and the Emperor, that he was but a Fellow-Subject.

Eph. 6. 7.

Rom. 13. 4.

Eph. 6. 9.

Subject. And so were all Offices of Justice, Kindness, and Compassion, perform'd, even to Strangers and Aliens from the Heavenly Commonwealth; not so much for the Reputation and Advantage these Actions might procure here, as for the Thanks and Reward and Honour they would certainly meet with above: as on the contrary, by any breach of these Rules of Justice, there was not only a Wrong done to the Party, but an Offence committed against the Great King; His Peace was disturb'd, and his Authority would interpose, and the Outrage was to be Answer'd at a Higher Court.

A malicious and false Accusation it was, the Jews put up against our Saviour; as if he had been an Enemy to *Cæsar*: And a no less unjust Prejudice afterwards is was, in the mouth of the Heathens; That Christianity subverted Governments, and was ruinous to the Empire. This therefore the Apologists encounter'd with Great Truth, and Force: and were well able to shew, That a True Christian was the best Commonwealths Man; and that they were the more profitable Citizens of *Rome*, by being Citizens of their Heavenly Country. For although the greatest Care is still to be taken, of securing to our selves our Station in Heaven; and all the Concerns and Affairs of the Earth must seem, in that respect, very Slight, and absolutely Inconsiderable: yet, even of These, a sufficient, and no less Effectual Care will be still taken by Those, who most regard the Interests of the Other World. Such a one will as affectionately and concernedly Desire the Good of his Country here, as they who know no other. If admitted to the Administration, he comes clear and

uncorrupted from any By-Respects, and wholly minds the Publick Welfare : Nor indeed setting it up in Competition with the Kingdom of Heaven, and advancing it by the Neglect of those Superior Interests ; the False, and Deservedly Unsuccessful Method of Humane Policy : But suffering no Private Regards to himself, to withdraw his Zeal from the Common Good. For so has God, by his Providence, order'd even the Earth, that its Governments are generally disturb'd and ruin'd by the same ways ; as betray a Neglect, and forfeit all Hopes of the Abiding City. By Injustice, Breach of Trust, by Oppression, Self-Love, and Private Interests, by sacrificing their Country to their own Revenge, Ambition, or Gain ; by the Narrow Spirit of such as consider nothing beyond themselves, and do not behave themselves like Citizens, no, not of any Commonwealth. So little do those who care not for the City above, care indeed for any : as they will be readiest, no doubt, to Venture for the Publick their Worldly Estates, and Temporary Lives ; who prize them least.

There are Noble Examples of the Old Heathens Love for their Country, left in the Greek and Roman Histories ; never Read but with Admiration, and highly deserving to be imitated. Nor is it to be deny'd, but that this Generous Spirit was cultivated in them by peculiar Maximes and Discipline ; and engag'd by the Institutions of their Religion ; which suppos'd their Deities to be Inhabitants among them, and Fellow Citizens ; and that they fought for their Gods, as well as for their Wives and Children : As the *Jews* too we know were animated singularly, by
their

their Zeal for the Temple, for the Defence of their City.

But the Christian Religion, tho' not Regardant to the Earth, nor fix'd to its Glebe ; is far from being wanting in Motives to this Love of a Community, but rather more forcibly Obliges to it : that Great and Chief Precept of Charity, by which the *Disciples* of Christ are to be *known* ; Amply Comprehending, and Nobly Undertaking and Advancing the whole Duty. By this we are engag'd, as to Love our God, so to Love our Neighbour ; to *Love our Neighbours, as Our selves* ; to *bear one anothers Burdens* ; to *Deny our selves* ; not to *seek our Own* ; for the sake of our Brethren, *to bear all things*, and to *Endure all things*. And this Communicative Grace, which freely exerts it self upon any single Object, most cheerfully assists a Multitude ; and bestows it self still, with the Greater Zeal, upon the more General Good. By this the Meaner Men are bound to lend their Hands to the Publick, the Rich their Substance, and the Wise their Counsel and Conduct. That Counsel I say and Direction, which the Plowman and Mechanick may not be so able to contribute ; and which the Petty, and the Great, Chapman may make a Market of ; those whose Leisure, and Plenty, Education, and Experience, have set in a due Heighth for Prospect, and above Temptation, are oblig'd by their Christianity to provide and supply ; and it is their Greatest Charity. If I should not rather say ; That those who are Maintain'd and Furnish'd by the Labour and Diligence of others, are bound to this Duty, by the Equitable Reason of their Easie Tenure : and are in Common Justice to be upon the Watch ; and to

Joh. 13. 35.

Mat. 22. 39.

Gal. 6. 2.

1 Cor. 12. 5, 7.

take care, that the Countryman and the Artisan be secure ; and that while they are Intent upon their Work, they be not surpriz'd by Foreign Craft or Force : as he that is fed and cloath'd by a Flock, is suppos'd to guard it from the Encroachments of a Trespasser, and the Assaults of the Wolf.

But as our Citizenship of Heaven, qualifies and engages us to maintain this Worldly Conversation on Earth ; so much more does it oblige us, to keep up the Spiritual Society of the Church ; that by which we are join'd, not as Men, but as Christians ; not incorporated for the small Comforts and Assistances of this short Life, but to contribute to our mutual Edification in the Faith, and to promote our Eternal Welfare, that we may *conver/e* together for ever. The Heavenly City commences here, by the present Communion of the Faithful : And by the Fundamental Charter of this our Incorporation, we are suppos'd to have a Right to their Company now, who design to be of that Catholick Society hereafter.

(2dly,) Such shou'd our Conversation be towards our Neighbour, in virtue of our Heavenly Relation : The same shou'd it be towards our selves, in the Regulation both of our Spirit, and of our Body.

Our Mind not too much affected, with the things of this World ; neither too much exalted, nor depressed by our Conversation here : *set*, and fix'd, *on Things above* : especially free from such Passions, as are unlawful and forbidden, Wrath, Envy, or Malice : such Passions as cannot be thought to be countenanced by Heaven, no more than they can be admitted there ; Infernal Emotions, and belonging to the Spirits of another Place.

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Our Body likewise to be preserv'd from all Contagion of this World, through which it is to pass ; that no Impurity defile it, nor Excess abuse it ; to be kept within the Bounds of Sobriety, Temperance, and Chastity. For knew the Soul no other Place, than the Earth ; it should however make some Distinction between the Inhabitants of it, and use its Reason to be discern'd from Brutes. But as it is conscious to it self, that it is of a Spiritual Nature ; and not at Home, till it comes to the Mansion of Spirits ; it must then likewise understand it self bound, to preserve the Body, its present Charge, according to the Direction it has received from the Holy Spirit. For were the Body, after this Life, eternally to be left ; and were it to perish with the Earth, from whence it was taken ; the Soul however ought to look to her self, to preserve her own Dignity, and not to suffer the Piece of Earth she informs, to transgress in her Presence, and under her Administration. But now, when the Soul moreover understands, that this Body, however *vile* and frail it may appear, is at present design'd for a Habitation of the Divine Spirit ; and at last for an Inhabitant of Heaven ; to be her Eternal, and alike Immortal Companion ; she is then to take care, to keep it something like a Temple of God now, and fit to be made a Glorious Body hereafter ; that our Dust, tho' *vile*, may be clean and unspotted, such as God may not loath and abhor, refuse to take into his hands, and to re-fashion, and condemn to an infinitely viler Condition.

Our Souls and our Bodies are of God : not of his Workmanship only, or subject to his Power ; but
preserv'd

reserv'd under his Appointments, and dedicated to his Service. We belong not to the Earth ; nor are our own : responsible for the dishonouring, misusing, and defacing of our selves ; as much as if we had attempted on another.

So are the Laws of that part of our Conversation, which is more private, and terminates in our selves ; fully and indispensably obliging, by virtue of our Heavenly Polity. And, whereas the other Moral Considerations, inducing to Temperance and Chastity, which are drawn from the Inconvenience and Damage of the contrary Vices ; may be easily either eluded, by a pretended Care of otherwise sufficiently securing our Vigour of Mind and Body, our Estates and Families ; or rejected, with a Claim, of what Men may call their Inherent Right, of disposing of themselves as they shall please ; and the Laws of this Place may not think fit to interpose, if the present Interest of the Publick appears not eminently concern'd : in these Cases, the Constitutions of the Heavenly City, openly pronounce the Excess to be in its own nature Criminal, demand peremptorily to be observ'd, and will indulge neither Toleration nor Connivance ; Excommunicating for Ever the Unrepenting Transgressor, from the Church above.

(3^{dly}.) From this Consideration of our Citizenship in Heaven, there results a Higher Duty of Conversation, in respect of Gods Holy Person.

As Inhabitants only of this Earth, we owe a Duty certainly to the Supreme Lord of it : And what now its several Princes demand, in right of our Citizenship here ; That is more justly to be paid to the
King

King of Kings, whose Lieutenants they are, and in whose Name they Act. But as we belong yet to another World, in which we are Eternally to Live, and under His Immediate Government; capable there of the nearest admission, and Highest Honours; we are still under a Greater, and indeed infinitely Obligated, Duty, to this our so Gracious peculiar Lord, and Everlasting Master.

And if we cannot, without a most Criminal Disobedience, neglect any of those Commands of his which we have mention'd, concerning either our selves or other Men; much less should we those, that tend immediately to Himself, and are directed to the Service of his Blessed Person. If our Commonwealth be in Heaven, thither are our Eyes and Hearts to be lifted up; our Face turn'd toward that City of ours; as the *Jews*, are still looking toward their *Jerusalem*. And if God be our King; to Him is our Duty instantly to be paid, and our Worship directly address'd. We, with the Angels, our Fellow Citizens, ascribing to him Blessing, and Honour and Glory now, as we may be admitted to do it, in their Company hereafter: Joyning our selves now in Congregations before Him, as belonging to that *General Assembly*; Heb. 12. 23. Worshipping also in some solemn Portions of Time, Devoted to his Service, as Dedicated to the Holy Eternity we expect; and in Places separated from the rest of the Earth, as in *the House of God*, as in *the Gate of Heaven*. Gen. 28. 17. Worthy is our God, to whom we should give all Glory and Honour: to his Blessed Nature it belongs; and to his peculiar Subjects, the ascribing of it appertains. But more Especially that Honour and Glory ought to be ascribed

scrib'd by Us, which has shin'd out upon Us, in his Mercy and Goodness; and most wonderfully, in that Inexpressibly Gracious Favour, on which the Church is now Meditating; and by which we have been redeem'd from Death, and admitted to this Expectation of our Inheritance in Heaven.

These Praises and Thanks are the principal Tribute God Exacts from us his Subjects, to be sent up to the *New Jerusalem*. A Tribute to him, to whom Tribute is certainly Due; and to be allow'd to Pay it, is to be admitted to a Heavenly Office here.

For we need not to be told that other Duty to him, whic our Wants, and Infirmities, our Fears of all kinds, and our Distresses here on Earth, of themselves suggest; that we should apply our selves to Him, for Remedy and Relief; to Him, our Gracious Master, and Mighty Protector. Tho' neither do our Necessities more naturally address themselves to him, for succour; than our Allegiance requires, that we should own his Government, by those our Petitions and Appeals. To make our Necessities known to him, is a mark of our Dependance, and an Acknowledgment of his Power: and then to leave the Relief and Redress to his Good Pleasure, is an Act of Submission to his Providence, and of Resignation and Obedience to his Gracious Will: We still remembring, that our chiefest Interest is in Heaven; and that, if our present want of Earthly Comforts is to be recompens'd hereafter, our Prayers have been much better Answer'd than they might be by us Conceive'd.

Between us the now Travelling Citizens, and between the City to which we tend, God has Establish'd

bliss'd a Commerce at present, and a Correspondence he requires. There is to be kept up a kind of Familiar *Conversation* with Heaven: We to represent our Wants, and offer up our Desires; and God answering our Petitions, in Grants often for the Goods of this Life, but always for those appertaining to the Better; Those his Choicest Gifts, his Graces, whereby He makes us acceptable to himself, and qualifies us for our other Estate; making not our *Body* yet, but our *Soul* still, to be less *Vile* in his sight. And then those Grants and Answers of God we are again gratefully to acknowledge, in a Return of Thanks and Praise. Such a Reciprocal Entercourse God has constituted between Him and us; and not to maintain it, is to be insensible both of the Highest Honour and Greatest Advantage that can be vouchsafed us.

This our Conversation with God, he is pleas'd also to own; and content it should be Publick: and acknowledg'd then it must be on our side, with all possible Demonstration of Respect. Nor is it more Sociable towards our Brethren, than it is Dutiful to our Lord; to make our United and more Solemn Appearance before Him; joining in our Prayers, not only for our mutual Assistance, but also in our Praises and Thanks; for his Greater Honour: that He who is so Gracious, as to come Himself, and be in the midst of us when met together; may find still a Company of his Subjects and Servants, a Heavenly Host below, as ready to receive and Attend him.

III. And

III. And now, by the Pious Motion of this Honourable Assembly, is the whole Nation with that Solemnity Addressing it self to this Heavenly King : not as to some great Foreign Prince, whose Assistance and Favour they would crave, against the Violence and Oppression of a Stranger ; but as to their Natural Lord, and Liege Sovereign, to whose Dominion their Enemy too is a Subject, and whose Protection therefore we implore ; That He would be pleas'd to interpose his Authority, and check the Encroaching Insolence ; own his Dependants, and peculiar Servants, the Depositories of his Holy Truth, and Professors of his Purer Worship ; would appear in their Righteous Quarrel, assert his Own Sacred Cause, and vindicate the Honour of His Name.

Upon the first Appearance of such a threatening Danger, it was the Duty of a Christian People, to resort to their Metropolis, and to apply themselves to their Sovereign Lord. Neither was it less their Wisdom, and the Result of their truest Policy, to be early in this Preparation ; a Preparation the most Necessary, and which will prove our securest Defence : if we can gain the Favour of the Almighty on our part ; and He will be entreated, to preside in the Direction of our Counsels, and in the Conduct of our Forces.

And on this Succour from Above we might with Confidence presume, if our *Conversation* with Heaven had been faithfully kept up by us ; if it hath not been broken off by our Neglect ; nay, Heaven it self render'd First our Enemy, by our frequent Revolts, and continual Contempt of its Just Authority.

This

This then must be our greatest Danger, and chiefly to be apprehended by us: and the earlier therefore still was this Recourse to be made, that we might timely reconcile our selves to our offended Lord; with due Submissions and Satisfactions, regain our Correspondence in Heaven; and prevent the Enemy on Earth from that great Advantage, not of being joyn'd by the accession of some new Territories, but of Acting upon us by Leave, or it may be by Commission, from above; and we not only Unassisted thence, and in our turn justly Neglected, but abandon'd to Him, and given for a Prey.

For confess we must, that the greater and nearer our challenge has been to the City above, the greater and more inexcusable has been the Crime of an unsuitable Contradicting *Conversation*. If the Being or Authority, of the Great King has been deny'd by any; if his Servants and Messengers, the Apostles, have been rejected; if the present Earthly Desires and Momentany Interests have generally had the Preference; in vain shall we claim the benefit of that Government in our Distress, which in our Prosperity we have disown'd: rather should we expect, that the Lord should take from us the Profession of the Gospel, that boast of our Kingdom, by which His has been disgrac'd; should sadly teach us better to consider our Heavenly Country, by bereaving us of This; by reducing us to that Condition, which others, not more unworthy than our selves have suffer'd, of becoming such Strangers and Pilgrims, as to go and seek another Country on the Earth.

They who duely understand the Value of this Heavenly City, must confess the Lord to be very

Gracious, if He shall even so secure It to us : could a People be so stupidly perverse, as to make that the necessary Method. Such a Penalty would then be but a slight Ransom, and truly an Amercement, to those who had deserved more dismal Effects of his just Indignation, and had forfeited Life Eternal.

To reflect on these Forfeitures, we may have made of our Heavenly Inheritance ; and to pray the Remission of them ; is the known Design of this Season : that by the Merits of our Saviour's *Death*, and by our *Conformity* through Repentance *to it*, for whose Memorial we are therefore preparing ; we may attain the *Resurrection from the Dead*, which too, in the Memorial of our Lord's Resurrection, we are after joyfully to recognize. By your Religious Appointment, the Consideration also of the Earthly Punishments, which the same Righteous Judge may inflict, very aptly joins in with this Spiritual Intention ; and is most effectually assisted and promoted by it. For in both respects, our Sins and Follies are to be lamented, God's Justice to be acknowledg'd, and his Judgments deprecated ; and by the means of the same Repentance only, are we to hope for a Release of his Displeasure, and a Restitution to his Favour, whether in this World, or in the World to Come.

Our Real Humiliation, and True Repentance, will infallibly restore us to the Rights and Privileges of our Heavenly City ; such is the Goodness of God, as to give us a certain Assurance of that Salvation, for which we should be most solicitous : and it is likewise the most probable Method that can be devis'd,

devis'd, of obtaining our Preservation below. God indeed is not pleas'd, and for our Interest it is, to give us any¹ perfect Assurance of this kind ; nor is the Sincereſt Penitent to promiſe himſelf Stability in Worldly Affairs. But as the Almighty is pleas'd in the Conſervation and Deſtruction of Empires, to work generally by Natural Means : ſo are we to remember, that on one hand there is no other better way of making a City on Earth *Abiding*, ſomething like that of Heaven, than by keeping the Rules of its Converſation, and by the obſervance of Religion and Vertue ; on the other, there is not neither any more natural way to the Ruine of any Government, than by tranſgreſſing the Laws of Heaven, and when Profaneſs, Injuſtice, and Intemperance, ſhall once prevail, and become National Crimes.

For ſo are Luxury and Lasciviouſneſs, known well to enervate and emasculate Men's Minds, and to diſpoſe and diſable them for any ſolid Counſel or vigorous Action. Neglect of the Publick plainly Gives it up : and undue purſuit of Private advantages, expoſes it to Sale. Diviſions and Animofities, make a Breach for the Enemy to Enter : and if they increaſe not his Numbers, diſconcert and diminifh our own. Forgetfulneſs. or Denial of God, his Providence, and Judgments to come, undermine all ſteady foundations of Probity and Fidelity, by which any Nation muſt ſtand : rendring without Force and abſolutely Null all the Laws, that can be made, by Yours or any other Human Authority : as Indifference for the Truths and Articles, and for the Communion and Fellowſhip of Chriſtianity, ſhould it continue, muſt at laſt Subvert the Proteſtant Religion ;

ligion; and in the Judgment of God and Man, make it a Reformation for such a People, to turn Papists again.

These are the Ways to the Destruction of any Church or Nation; certain Causes of God's just Displeasure, and as effectual Instruments of his Revenge. For it cannot be expected that he should be Oblig'd by such a Course, to exert his extraordinary Power, and to restrain the Natural Tendency; but rather provoked to hasten the approaching Event, and to precipitate the impending Ruine.

For the Preventing such Fatal Consequences we are now met before God; and by the Humble Confession of our Iniquities, and acknowledgment of our Deserts, and by Vows of Amendment, have I hope made way for the Almighty, with Honour to undertake our Cause, and with safety to his Eternal Rules to become our Protector. May he give us Grace to perform these Vows now made in our Distress; and to stand to the Contract of Obedience, we have Solemnly renew'd. This if He Grants, will be the most Signal and the most Indubitable mark of the Divine Favour; the most Hopeful Pledge of his Defence here, and an unquestionable Assurance of our Happiness hereafter.

Let us therefore all take care, for our Present and our Future Safety, that our Conversation be in all Respects, as shall be Agreeable to our Heavenly City: that by our Behaviour, our Religion may be discern'd; and our Hopes and Expectations appear by our Actions: We Living in this World, as if we really Believ'd Another; and not placing our highest Satisfaction here in Gratifications of the Body, or in such
Power

Power or Honour as the Earth can conferr. Our Conversation to be as in the way, the way to our Native, our Better Country: and for our sure-Direction, Heaven to be still in our Eye; and we never to lose the Sight of it, however the Earth with all its Mountains may offer to interpose. This Prospect, in time of Worldly Prosperity, to be our Restraint; and in Adversity and Tribulation, our great Support: 'till thorough this short Vale, if not of Misery, yet of Vanity, we arrive at last to that Everlasting State of True Happiness and Joy. For which may God of his Mercy prepare us now, and to it hereafter bring us, by the Merits of our Lord, and the Assistance of the Holy Spirit.

F I N I S.

BOOKS Printed for *Walter Kestilby* at the *Bishop's-Head* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1701.

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